

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 001658

SIPDIS

FOR WHA/CCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/27/2015

TAGS: [CU](#) [PHUM](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [EZ](#)

SUBJECT: CZECH COUNTRY REVIEW FOR WAIVER OF TITLE III OF  
THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: STATE 207359

Classified By: Poloff Sarah C. Peck for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary. The Czech Republic is a staunch supporter of democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms in Cuba. For years it sponsored the annual Cuba human rights resolution in the UNCHR, and even though it is no longer a member of the Commission, it supports the Cuba country-specific resolution each year. In addition, high-level Czech government officials have visited and received Cuban dissidents in Florida and Prague to focus the world's attention on the abuses of the Castro regime. In recognition of the Czechs, high-profile commitment to Cuba, Caleb McCarry, the State Department's new Cuba Transition Coordinator, recently visited Prague to thank the Czechs. End summary.

2. (C) The Czech Republic has maintained an active interest in advocating for freedom and human rights in Cuba since its own transition from a totalitarian regime in 1989. First former President Vaclav Havel, an international recognized human rights activist, and then other members of the Czech leadership, have focused efforts on Cuba and assisting the exiled dissident movement. These efforts redoubled following the 2003 severe crackdown by the Castro government on Cuban dissidents that resulted in the imprisonment of many freedom advocates. The GOCR condemned the crackdown, issuing an official statement calling on the Government of Cuba to honor its international human rights commitments and obligations. FM Svoboda instituted a policy requesting all diplomats to raise the issue of Cuba at any international meetings. This policy, together with Czech protests, was delivered to the Cuban Government via official protest notes. In addition, Czech President Vaclav Klaus and the Czech Parliament issued statements in support of Cuban dissidents and condemning the situation in Cuba.

3. (C) In July 2003, then Prime Minister Vladimir Spidla traveled to Florida to meet with representatives of Cuban dissidents, all of whom were political prisoners. This visit was returned in May 2004, when eight Cuban dissidents traveled to Prague to meet with Senate Chairman Petr Pithart, Civic Democratic Party leader Miroslav Topolaneck, and Havel.

4. (C) Currently, the Czechs are advocating for a common EU-Cuba policy that recognizes political dissidents and provides sanctions for senior officials of the Castro regime. Among EU countries, the Czech Republic is one of the strongest supporters of the policy of inviting Cuban dissidents to National Day festivities. The Czechs also provide training and support to Cuban civil society through the efforts of People in Need (PIN), the MFA's NGO partner. These activities highlight the committed engagement of the Czechs on the issue of Cuban human rights. In recognition of this commitment, Caleb McCarry, the new Cuba Transition Coordinator, traveled to Prague in Oct 2005 to meet with Czechs actively working to promote democracy in Cuba, including GOCR officials, former dissidents, and PIN.

-----  
IMPORTANCE OF TITLE III WAIVER  
-----

5. (C) A waiver of the right to bring an action against entities and nationals of the Czech Republic is necessary to U.S. national interests. Loss of this waiver would jeopardize our partnership with a country that has been willing to be at the forefront of efforts to force the Castro regime to adhere to international standards of human rights and fundamental freedoms. From Sponsoring and supporting the annual Cuban resolution to engaging in high-level diplomatic efforts with Cuban dissidents, the Czech Republic's profile on this issue is one of the strongest in Europe. This cooperation would definitely be impacted negatively if the GOCR were to lose the Title III waiver and feel that it is being unjustly "punished" when in fact it has been one of our best advocates on behalf of the Cuban cause.

CABANISS